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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/535,605

02/02/2006

Frank Baumann

Umicore 0140-US

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23719 7590 11/25/2009

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EXAMINER

GREGORIO, GUINEVER S

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1793

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

11/25/2009

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/535,605	Applicant(s) BAUMANN ET AL.	
	Examiner GUINEVER S. GREGORIO	Art Unit 1793	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 14 October 2009.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-11 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 1-8 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☒ Claim(s) 1-11 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☒ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Drawings

1. The subject matter of this application admits of illustration by a drawing to facilitate understanding of the invention. The Specification refers to Figures which were not furnished with the application. Applicant is required to furnish a drawing under 37 CFR 1.81(c). No new matter may be introduced in the required drawing. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d).

Specification

2. The abstract of the disclosure is objected to because the abstract exceeds the number of allowable words. Correction is required. See MPEP § 608.01(b).

Election/Restrictions

Restriction is required under 35 U.S.C. 121 and 372.

This application contains the following inventions or groups of inventions which are not so linked as to form a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1.

In accordance with 37 CFR 1.499, applicant is required, in reply to this action, to elect a single invention to which the claims must be restricted.

Group I, claim(s) 1-8, drawn to a process for producing hydrogen-containing fuel gas.

Group II, claim(s) 9-11, drawn to an apparatus for producing hydrogen-containing fuel gases.

Art Unit: 1793

3. The inventions listed as Groups I and II do not relate to a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1 because, under PCT Rule 13.2, they lack the same or corresponding special technical features for the following reasons: The apparatus recites the special technical feature in Claim 9 wherein the water necessary for steam reforming is added separately of together with the hydrocarbon before the second reactor stage by means of nozzles or injectors, which is not shared by the process in which the special technical feature is the amount of residual hydrocarbon content at the outlet of the autothermal reforming stage. Claim 10 from which claim 9 is an improper claim because it does claim any structure.

4. A telephone call was made to John Santalone on to request an oral election to the above restriction requirement.

Applicant is advised that the reply to this requirement to be complete must include (i) an election of a species or invention to be examined even though the requirement may be traversed (37 CFR 1.143) and (ii) identification of the claims encompassing the elected invention.

The election of an invention or species may be made with or without traverse. To preserve a right to petition, the election must be made with traverse. If the reply does not distinctly and specifically point out supposed errors in the restriction requirement, the election shall be treated as an election without traverse.

5. Applicant is reminded that upon the cancellation of claims to a non-elected invention, the inventorship must be amended in compliance with 37 CFR 1.48(b) if one or more of the currently named inventors is no longer an inventor of at least one claim remaining in the application. Any amendment of inventorship must be accompanied by a request under 37 CFR 1.48(b) and by the fee required under 37 CFR 1.17(i).

Allowable Subject Matter

6. If elected, Claims 1-8 would be allowable.
7. The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter: The prior art does not teach the specific order of an autothermal reactor that feeds into a steam reactor wherein the autothermal reactor has a residual hydrocarbon content of from 0.1 to 10% by volume and the steam reforming is at a temperature below 650 °C
8. Prasad et al. (U.S. Pub. No. 2002/0155061 A1) teaches a method for producing crude syngas where the autothermal reactor feeds into a fired reformer (paragraph 10).
9. Pettit et al. teaches an autothermal reactor parallel with a steam reformer (abstract).
10. Aasberg-Petersen et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 7,241,401 B2) teaches steam reformer before autothermal reactor in series which is backwards from the series taught by applicant.
11. Karafian et al. teaches a Convective Reformer which steams reforms that is fed into an autothermal reformer which is then fed back in to the convective reformer which steam reforms.
12. Wang et al. teaches partial oxidation, autothermal reforming, and catalytic partial oxidation used to generate steam for steam reforming.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to GUINEVER S. GREGORIO whose telephone number is

Art Unit: 1793

(571)270-5827. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday, 10:30-5:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Curt Mayes can be reached on 571-272-1234. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Gsg
November 21, 2009

/Melvin Curtis Mayes/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 1793